

CLAIMS

1. A portable entertainment machine comprising a digital object store adapted to store digital objects, having a short-range wireless transceiver device capable of transmitting and receiving signals that are representative of a digital object to and from the transceiver of another portable entertainment device, and a manually operable control adapted to permit the user of the entertainment machine to exercise at least some control over swapping of digital objects between the digital object stores of two or more such entertainment machines.
2. A machine as claimed in claim 1 comprising an electronic display capable of being used to display to the machine user one or more of any digital objects currently held in the digital object store of the machine.
3. A machine as claimed in claim 2 in which the electronic display comprises a visual display.
4. A machine as claimed in claim 2 in which the electronic display comprises an audible display.
5. A machine as claimed in claim 4 in which the display is adapted to display the entire contents of the digital object store.
6. A machine as claimed in claim 4 in which the display is adapted to display a list of the objects held in the store and is capable of displaying a more detailed representation of a digital object when that object is selected from the list.
7. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the manually operable control is a voice-activated control.

8. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the manually operable control comprises a touch-sensitive device.

9. A machine as claimed in claim 1 comprising a casing of a size that is suitable for putting in a pocket.

5 10. A machine as claimed in claim 1 adapted to provide to the user information on data objects that become potentially available to be acquired from a similar machine that comes within range of the machine, to enable the user to take a decision on whether or not to proceed with a potential swapping transaction.

10 11. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the machine is capable of being provided by the user with a standing instruction to swap a certain data object or category of data objects in the data object store for another specified data object or category of data objects if such a required object or object category becomes available for swap, and any conditions imposed  
15 on the swap by the user are complied with.

12. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the digital object store comprises a retained object portion for storing data objects for which the machine user has taken a decision to retain at least for the time being, or for data objects for which the user has not yet taken a decision on whether  
20 to retain or swap, and a selected article window portion of the data store in which data objects are placed for which the user has taken at least a preliminary decision to dispose of provided that an acceptable swap deal can be arranged.

13. A machine as claimed in claim 12 characterised in that when the  
25 user's machine comes within range of another similar machine information is transmitted to the other machine to inform the other machine of the content of the selected article window store.

14. A machine as claimed in claim 13 in which the display comprises a reciprocal display portion adapted to display the content of the selected article window store of another machine which comes within range.
15. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the machine is provided  
5 with an alert device for alerting the user to the availability of a potential swap.
16. A machine as claimed in claim 1 which is adapted to transmit an incomplete digital object for sampling by the user of another machine.
- 10 17. A machine as claimed in claim 1 which is adapted to transmit a data object for sampling over a limited length of time to facilitate a decision being made as to whether or not the data object is to be acquired by proceeding with a swap transaction.
- 15 18. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the data object is a game program, and the machine is so arranged that the current owner of the game can allow the user of another similar machine within range to sample playing of the game by exercising game control over the wireless connection, the game being run on the machine of the current game owner.
- 20 19. A machine as claimed in claim 12 comprising manually operable selection means to enable the user of the machine to select which data objects are transferred from the retention portion of the store to the selected article window portion of the store and vice-versa.
20. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the machine comprises a swap proposal indicator means for indicating to another, similar machine the swap transaction being proposed.

21. A machine as claimed in claim 20 in which the swap proposal indicator means comprises a linking indicator function adapted to link the representations of the digital data objects held by the two machines in their selected article window stores, and to communicate that link indicator to the other machine.

22. A machine as claimed in claim 21 comprising a swap approval indicator means which is adapted to respond to transmit a response to the other machine in answer to the output of the linking indicator function of the machine which first suggests a swap proposal.

23. A machine as claimed in claim 1 comprising swap control function arranged to be initiated on acceptance of a proposed swap by a similar such machine.

24. A machine as claimed in claim 23 in which a swap protocol is utilised which ensures that the data objects that have been agreed to be swapped are transmitted simultaneously by the two machines.

25. A machine as claimed in claim 1 comprising a data object input means to enable data objects to be loaded into the machine by a purchasing transaction from a data object vendor rather than by a data object swapping transaction.

26. A machine as claimed in claim 25 in which the data object input means comprises a reader adapted to read a physical storage medium, the reader being arranged to load purchased data objects into the machine store.

27. A machine as claimed in claim 26 in which the reader is arranged to disable the storage medium following reading.

28. A machine as claimed in claim 25 in which the data object input means utilises a short-range wireless network.

29. A machine as claimed in claim 25 in which the data input means utilises cellular telephony.

5 30. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the digital data object is a game program which when run on the entertainment machine enables the user to play a game.

31. A machine as claimed in claim 30 in which the game implemented by the digital data object involves an additional player or players who  
10 communicate with the said entertainment machine, on which the game is run, by means of a short-range wireless network, the additional player/s not gaining access to a copy of the game through playing the game.

32. A machine as claimed in claim 30 in which the digital data object comprises a game feature for assisting a player to play a game.

15 33. A machine as claimed in claim 3 adapted to be operable as a mobile telephone, said display being used to display the telephone functions.

34. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the digital object is an enhancement to the functionality of the existing machine.

35. A machine as claimed in claim 33 in the digital object is a ring tone.

20 36. Software encoded on a data carrier which when loaded into a control processor of a portable entertainment machine causes the machine to operate as claimed in claim 1.

37. Apparatus to enable a plurality of players to swap digital objects, the apparatus comprising a short-range wireless network, a plurality of portable entertainment machines for carrying by respective players, each machine being as claimed in claim 1.

- 5 38. A machine as claimed in claim 3 in which the displayed object takes the form of a decorative virtual card or token.

39. A machine as claimed in claim 3 in which the data object comprises a moving image.

- 10 40. A machine as claimed in claim 39 in which the image has associated textual information which is displayed on the display.

41. A machine as claimed in claim 39 in which the image has associated audio information which is suitable for being played by an audio playback component of the machine.

- 15 42. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein executable by a portable entertainment machine which comprises a short-range wireless transceiver device capable of transmitting and receiving signals to and from the transceiver of another portable entertainment device, and a manually operable control adapted to permit the user of the entertainment machine to exercise at least some control over the use of the transceiver device: the computer program product comprising code that when loaded into the portable entertainment machine causes the portable entertainment machine to be capable of swapping, by way of the transceiver device, signals that are representative of digital objects for swapping digital objects between digital object stores of two or more such entertainment machines.
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43. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which causes the machine to be capable of displaying a list of the objects held in the store, and to be capable of displaying a more detailed representation of a digital object when that object is selected by a user  
5 from the list.

44. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which causes the machine to be adapted to provide to the user information on data objects that become potentially available to be acquired from a similar machine that comes within range of the machine,  
10 to enable the user to take a decision on whether or not to proceed with a potential swapping transaction.

45. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which causes the machine to be capable of being provided by the user with a standing instruction to swap a certain data object or category of  
15 data objects in the data object store for another specified data object or category of data objects if such a required object or object category becomes available for swap, and any conditions imposed on the swap by the user are complied with.

46. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which causes the machine to allocate a retained object portion of the digital object store for storing data objects for which the machine user has taken a decision to retain at least for the time being, or for data objects for which the user has not yet taken a decision on whether to retain or swap,  
20 and to allocate a selected article window portion of the data store in which data objects can be placed for which the user has taken at least a preliminary decision to dispose of provided that an acceptable swap deal can be arranged.  
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47. A computer program product as claimed in claim 46 characterised in that the product comprises means which causes the machine to operate such that when the user's machine comes within range of another similar machine information is transmitted to the other machine to inform the  
5 other machine of the content of the selected article window store.

48. A computer program product as claimed in claim 47 in which the product comprises code means which causes a display of the machine to comprise a reciprocal display portion adapted to display the content of the selected article window store of another machine which comes within  
10 range.

49. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which causes the machine to issue an alert to the user upon the availability of a potential swap.

50. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code  
15 means which causes the machine to be capable of transmitting an incomplete digital object for sampling by the user of another machine.

51. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which causes the machine to transmit a data object for sampling over a limited length of time to facilitate a decision being made as to  
20 whether or not the data object is to be acquired by proceeding with a swap transaction.

52. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 in which the data object is a game program, the program comprising code means which configures the machine whereby the current owner of the game can allow  
25 the user of another similar machine within range to sample playing of the game by exercising game control over the wireless connection, the game being run on the machine of the current game owner.



53. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which configures the manually operable control to enable the user of the machine to select which data objects are transferred from the retention portion of the store to the selected article window portion of the store and vice-versa.

54. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which configures the machine to provide a swap proposal indicator means for indicating to another, similar machine the swap transaction being proposed.

55. A computer program product as claimed in claim 54 in which the swap proposal indicator means comprising a linking indicator function adapted to link the representations of the digital data objects held by the two machines in their selected article window stores, and to communicate that link indicator to the other machine.

56. A computer program product as claimed in claim 55 comprising code means which configures the machine to provide a swap approval indicator means which is arranged to respond to transmit a response to the other machine in answer to the output of the linking indicator function of the machine which first suggests a swap proposal.

57. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which configures the machine to provide a swap control function arranged to be initiated on acceptance of a proposed swap by a similar such machine.

58. A computer program product as claimed in claim 57 comprising code means which provides a swap protocol that ensures that the data objects that have been agreed to be swapped are transmitted simultaneously by the two machines.

59. A computer program product as claimed in claim 42 comprising code means which configures the machine for enabling data objects to be loaded into the machine by purchasing transaction from a data object vendor rather than by a data object swapping transaction.